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Global Influences

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Norton, Will, "Global Influences" (2009). *Faculty Publications, College of Journalism & Mass Communications*. 11.

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Published in *Wheaton*, Volume 12, Issue 1, Winter 2009.

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Global Influences

Greater freedoms in the Balkans may come through knowledge and skills of journalism graduates.

by Dr. Will Norton, Jr. '63, Dean at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Hans Nielsen Hauge was a Norwegian farmer who lived during the late 1700s and early 1800s. As a result of a life-changing conversion experience, he traveled throughout Norway, telling others about the revelation he had from God.

He also was a successful businessman whose acumen helped spark the economic rise of the peasant class of that nation. Government leaders were worried about a peasant revolt, and leaders of the Norwegian State Church feared the outcomes of his house meetings. As a result, he was arrested for his religious beliefs, for printing and speaking about those religious beliefs, and for meeting to discuss those beliefs.

His unjust arrest and imprisonment, and the harsh conditions in which he was held in prison, eventually led to his being freed and to passage of a constitution that brought to Norway:

- Freedom of speech,
- Freedom of the press,
- Freedom of religion,
- Freedom of assembly, and
- Freedom to petition the government.

The Norwegian Lutheran Mission and other evangelical organizations developed as a result of Hauge's activities. About 200 years later, Wheaton alumnus Asbjorn Kvalbein, M.A. '79 founded NLM's Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communication. Wheaton's own graduate program in journalism and communication, which placed graduates in positions of media leadership around

the world, was the prototype for Gimlekollen. Nine years ago my father, Will Norton, Sr., who was dean of Wheaton College Graduate School for nine years, and I visited this school in Kristiansand, a city on the southeastern tip of Norway.

More recently, another Wheaton Graduate School alumnus, Oyvind Aadland M.A. '87, the former director of international studies at Gimlekollen, developed a partnership with Cardiff University and the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The result of this partnership was the establishment in 2005 of the Kosovo Institute for Journalism and Communication, whose mission is based on a commitment to the five individual freedoms first articulated in the U.S. Constitution.

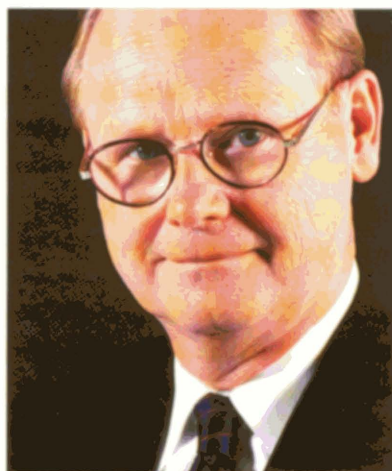
I spoke to the first graduating class of

KIJAC and reminded them how those freedoms had transformed life in America and in Norway.

Though freedom and prosperity may have seemed impossible in the Balkans from as far back as 1389, following the defeat of the Serbs at the Battle of Pristina, none of us knows whether modernization will develop in Kosovo and the Balkans the way it did in Norway during Hauge's day. For this reason, the optimism of our Norwegian friends should be an encouragement. Their bright outlook is based on five of the same freedoms we cherish.

As I spoke at KIJAC's commencement, I wondered if one of the students in the audience might emulate Hans Nielsen Hauge. The future of those freedoms in the Balkans might very well depend on the knowledge and skills of people like these graduates of the Kosovo Institute for Journalism and Communication.

" . . . the optimism of our Norwegian friends should be an encouragement. Their bright outlook is based on five of the same freedoms we cherish."



Dean at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since 1990, Dr. Will Norton, Jr., served as president of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication from 2000 to 2001, and as president of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communications from 1989 to 1990. In 2005 the Scripps Howard Foundation named him Journalism Administrator of the Year. He has been a trustee of the Freedom Forum since 1998.